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ABSTRACT

The guide is designed to help educators integrate the study of aging into the high school curriculum. Objectives are to promote and support the study of aging and the aging process, dispel popular misconceptions surrounding aging, aid educators in establishing programs with, by, and for seniors, and provide a list of helpful resource groups. Arranged into 7 parts, part 1 focuses on biological aging and myths related to lifelong learning, flexibility and change, sex, and senility. Part 2 deals with retirement and discusses income, employment, and profitable retirement. Part 3 discusses active involvement in community life and part 4 examines ways in which seniors handle problems of loneliness, poverty, and housing. Part 5 focuses on intergenerational programs such as in-school teaching and placement programs, teaching-learning programs, after-school job registries, intergenerational health fairs, in-school work assistance programs, adopt a grandparent/grandchild program, heritage programs, tutoring programs in schools, and conferences. In part 6, aging in other societies is briefly discussed. The document concludes with part 7, a 5-page annotated bibliography of over 25 books and films produced between 1976 and 1981. (LH)

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A Teacher's Resource Guide on Aging

SP 015 555

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A Teacher's Resource Guide on Aging

Published by:
Help the Aged
44 Eglinton Ave. West
Suite 311 A
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M4R 1A1

Written by:
Fiona Lamont Green
Education Director

Researcher:
Darlene Carty

Special Advisor:
Gretta Riddell-Dixon
Ryerson Polytechnical Institute
Toronto, Ontario

Cover Design:
Maureen Coughlin-Bailey

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Introduction

From July 26th to August 6th, 1982, the United Nations held a World Assembly on Aging in Vienna, Austria. The purpose for this worldwide meeting was to stimulate timely and sound responses to the challenge of rapid population aging. Part of this challenge can be met through a positive understanding of aging and the aging process. This education should begin when we are young since misconceptions about anything begin at an early age.

The aims of *A Teacher's Resource Guide on Aging* are:

1. to promote and support the study of aging and the aging process in Canadian high schools;
2. to dispel popular misconceptions surrounding aging and the aging process;
3. to aid educators in establishing programs with, by and for seniors;
4. to provide a list of helpful resource groups that can assist educators in the further understanding of the aging process, and in the establishment of intergenerational programs.

The study of aging can be integrated into many areas of the high school curriculum. It can be a component of courses dealing with health, the family or human development.

Although *A Teacher's Resource Guide on Aging* is primarily for educators, it will be of value to students doing research on aging and for those undertaking independent study.

The official logo of the World Assembly on Aging is the tropical banyan tree. From its main branches drop aerial roots which establish themselves in the ground to form additional trunks — each tree eventually providing a canopy up to 30 metres high and 700 hundred metres in circumference. The logo symbolising longevity, self-reliance, continuing growth and a community meeting place, was designed by 80 year old U.S. artist Oscar Berger.

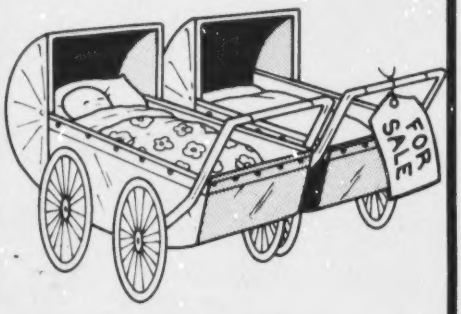
The Graying of Nations

This is the age of aging. For the first time in history we are seeing the worldwide emergence of a new generation— the over-60s.

Graphics— David Eaton

FEWER BABIES

World birth rate is slowing down. In 1950 there were over 36 babies born for every 1,000 people. By 2025 the U.N. estimates there will be only half that number.

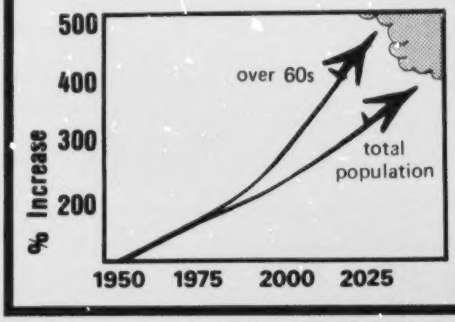


LONGER LIVES

Meanwhile improvements in health and nutrition mean that people are living longer. Average life expectancy at birth was only 47 in 1950. By 2025 life expectancy is expected to be 70 years.

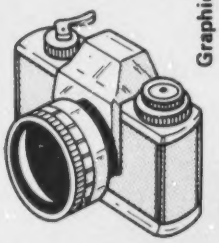
FASTER AGING

Total world population is expected to treble between 1950 and 2025. But the U.N. predicts a five-fold increase in the population of over 60s

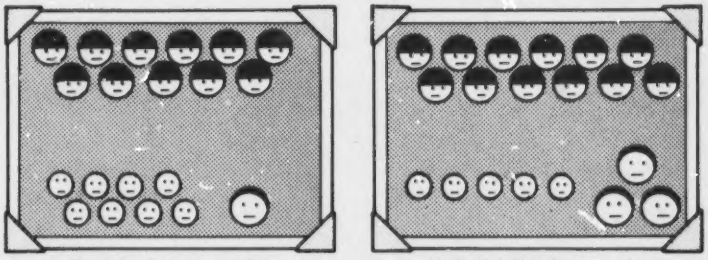


FAMILIES OF THE FUTURE

The parents of today are the grandparents of tomorrow. As younger generations decide to have fewer children and older generations live longer, so the structure of the typical global family is changing. By 2025 there will be relatively fewer young people to support a growing proportion of over-60s. The pictures show how the relative sizes of each age group will change.

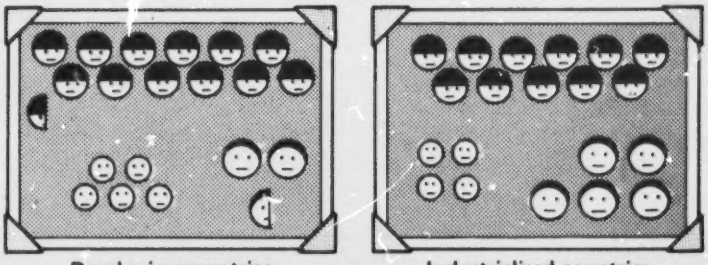


1975



Developing countries — Industrialised countries

2025



Developing countries — Industrialised countries

over 60 — 15–59 — 0–14

SHIFTING THE BALANCE

By 2025 the ratio of over 60s to adults aged 15-59 in East Asia is expected to double.

In China 7 workers supported 1 old person in 1975. In 2025 they will be supporting 2.

PENSIONER POWER

One third of all voters will be over 60 in the industrialised countries by 2025.

one

Aging and the Aging Process

BIOLOGICAL AGING

Our bodies begin to age from the day that we are born. Many stages of our lives, in fact, are labelled by age — the teenage years, middle age, old age.

As we move from infanthood to being toddlers, then active children, and through puberty to adulthood, our bodies grow and change, each at their own rate. One year John might be the shortest in his class, yet two years later he has become the tallest. This is part of the aging process.

As we become older other changes occur, and since we are all individuals, the process of aging becomes unique to each one of us. Some people's hair shows signs of grey in their early thirties, while for others there is not a trace until their sixties or seventies. Men can experience a certain hair loss (balding) which again can occur at any time from young adulthood through the senior years. Tell-tale wrinkles begin to appear and this, too, doesn't happen overnight. It is a gradual process, often hastened by over-exposure to harsh sunlight or, as some feel, slowed by "miracle" lotions!

As we age, our recuperative powers lessen. A six year old will recover from a broken arm faster than a thirty year old or a seventy year old. The same can be said of illness for, upon becoming older, we take longer to regain our strength. Certain loss of energy or vigor, or a general slowing down, is still not fully understood since the rate of loss is again dependent upon the individual. An actual visible effect can also be seen in the reduction of bone mass. We actually do shrink, and our bones and muscles lose a certain elasticity.

Other changes, as we grow older, vary from person to person, and are influenced by diet, stress, environment and overall fitness, more than age. Many health problems that occur, are considered to be age-related rather than part of the natural aging process. Hardening of the arteries, once thought to be part of the aging process, is now known to be affected by such things as diet and hypertension. This condition is not universal, although it may happen to people over an extended length of time.

Certain hearing loss can be directly related to our environment, the result of which can affect us at any time. Excess noise, such as freeway traffic, loud music and high-pitched sounds in the workplace, will cause varying amounts of hearing loss. Conversely, there is little change in the hearing of people living in parts of the world where the noise factor is slight.

A change in vision can also present itself at any age. Some people experience a marked degeneration in their eyesight, while others have been known to undergo an improvement as years pass. Although serious sight conditions can arise in later years, for example glaucoma and cataracts, proper medical attention can prevent blindness that would result from these disorders.

Loss of teeth has nothing to do with the aging process. Gum inflammation, which slowly breaks down bone structure, begins early in life and, although it coincides with the aging of an individual, is due instead to lack of proper dental hygiene and poor diet.

Arthritis is also commonly associated with old age. However, the onset of this condition can begin in one's twenties or thirties but may not visibly affect that person until a much later date.

Many people fear that old age will bring along with it serious debilitations. BUT OLD AGE IS NOT AN ILLNESS. The importance of maintaining a good diet, of keeping fit and of having proper medical attention throughout youth and middle age is a prime factor in determining good health during the later

years. Hence, a seventy-five year old who has remained in good health can be fitter than a person twenty-five years his junior, if the younger person has not maintained his health.

Present statistics show us that although 40 to 60 per cent of seniors may have a chronic ailment such as arthritis or rheumatism, only 20 per cent feel that it interferes with an active social life and only 15 per cent are in some need of medical assistance for that condition. It is also projected that our future older generation will have an even healthier old age than today's older adults. The myth that all seniors suffer from ill-health is definitely unfounded.

OUR AGING POPULATION

In 1982, 9.5 per cent of the Canadian population is over age 65. By 2030, it is projected that between 16 per cent and 20 per cent of the population will be over age 65, and approximately 5.7 per cent of the population will be between the ages of 60 and 64. By contrast, approximately 20 per cent of the population will be under 17 as compared to the present 28 per cent[1]. This population shift is not just confined to Canada, but is a world-wide phenomenon.

The United Nations uses age 60 when comparing statistics on aging and has stated that by 2025 there will be more than one billion people over the age of 60. That is one out of every seven persons, and these people will, for the first time, outnumber the young in many countries.

In 2025,

- industrial countries will have 23 per cent of the population over age 60 as compared to 16 per cent in 1975,
- developing countries will have 12 per cent of the population over age 60 as compared to 6 per cent in 1975.

The implications of this population shift will be most obvious in developing countries. Today over 50 per cent of their populations are under 25 and this will have changed dramatically by 2025. At that time too, three-quarters of those over 60 will be living in the Third World.

A country is considered "old" when more than 8 per cent of its population is over 65. It is interesting to note that countries with a high standard of living have a larger proportion of older people than those countries with poor socio-economic conditions. "Old" countries have good social services, opportunities for employment and afford women a high status. "Young" countries have lower standards of living, lack adequate social services, have high unemployment and give women low status.

Better medical care, better hygiene and better nutrition have given rise to longer life expectancy. Birth control has produced smaller families. As long as retirement age remains at 60 or 65, projections show that in the future, there will also be a lower proportion of wage earners in industrialized countries. A serious consideration then, would be for older people to have the option of remaining as members of the work force, thus prompting flexible retirement policies.

In Canada, life expectancy for males is 70 and for females is 76. It was once thought that women survived longer than men because they remained in the home and did not live the fast-paced life of the working world. However, as women's lifestyles are changing, and their careers are paralleling those of men, there is no conclusive data to show that the 70/76 mortality gap is narrowing.

It is likely that women will continue to outnumber men in later years and this has brought great financial pressures to the increasing number of women who have remained single, are divorced or widowed, and who are not receiving company pensions. Men who are not covered by private pensions also experience similar financial problems.

Two-thirds of widows live below the poverty line. A couple living with two pensions can live appreciably better than a woman or man living alone. These inequalities are currently being addressed by various organizations in an effort to alert governments and the general public to the situation. Companies are also being petitioned to provide equitable pension plans for both men and women.

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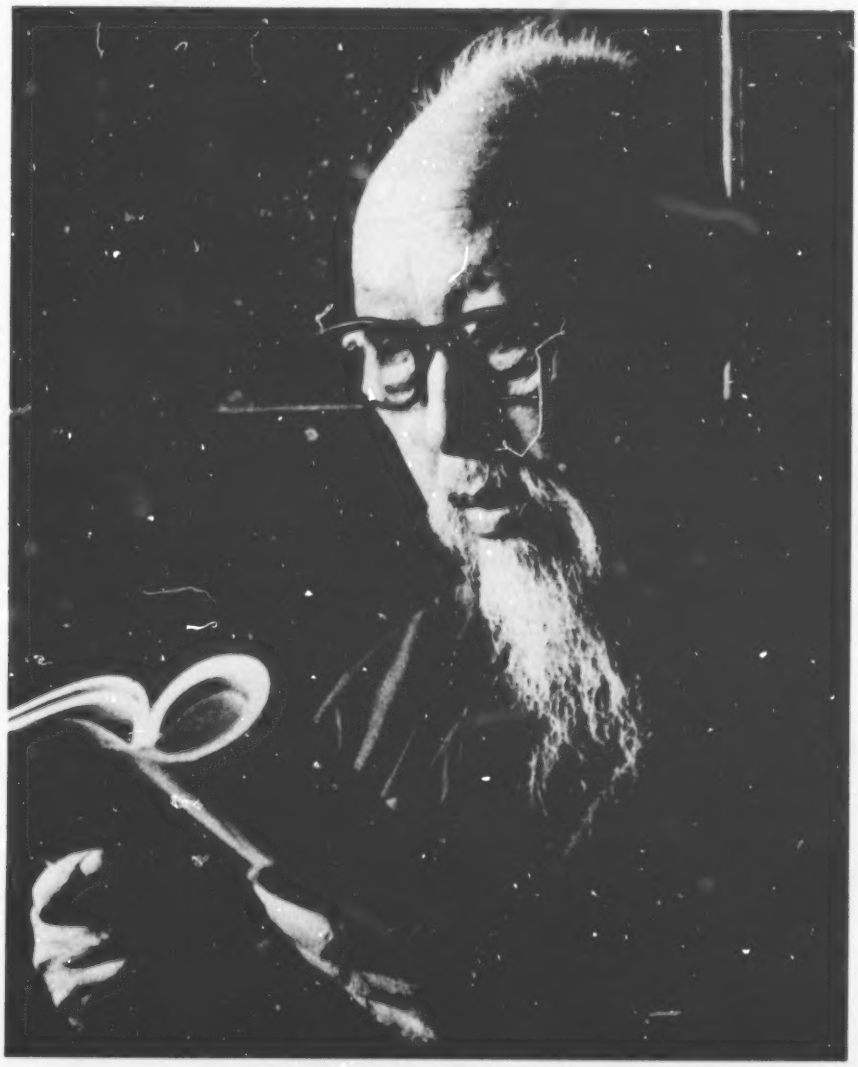
1. B.J. Powell & J.K. Martin, "Economic Implications of an Aging Society in Canada", National Symposium on Aging, Ottawa, 1978.

The financial plight of women and their future is also being felt in developing countries. Traditionally, cottage industries have provided a good income for women but the advent of mass production in industrialized plants has created similar products at a lower cost. Groups such as the Associated Country Women of the World are addressing these concerns.

It is evident that economic and social problems associated with our aging population will not disappear. Regardless of country, the World Assembly on Aging urges that, "We must search for alternatives that stress the productive involvement of the aged, not just their protection and care".



DISPELLING THE MYTHS

Our misconceptions about aging tend to prevent us from seeing seniors in a positive light. These myths have left us with an uncomplimentary portrait of our later years. "White-haired, inactive, docile, unemployed and unemployable, weak, a nuisance", become dangerous forms of stereotyping that have placed seniors as a race apart because, "We don't want to be like them!"

People having misconceptions about aging see retirement as non-productive and reduced earnings as a passport to non-existence when neither is the case.

SENIORS ARE INDIVIDUALS

Ninety-one per cent of seniors in Canada live in the community and lead active and diverse lives.

It is a fact that as we grow older we become less alike. Two year olds can effectively be put in the same room and will play together with similar toys. Some eleven year olds prefer baseball over football while other enjoy soccer, swimming or tennis. In high school studies, student preferences are as vast as the curriculum itself.

Life is a series of different experiences which make up the total man. Seniors cannot, like two year olds, be placed in a room and all be expected to enjoy bridge or bingo. If these haven't been previous interests, why should they be forced upon anyone at a later stage of life? The interests of a sixty-four year old employed individual won't change or lessen upon retirement. Rather, activities may expand to include new pursuits that the person, while working, was unable to previously consider.

Older adults have, unfortunately, been victims of age segregation, much like teenagers, who tend to be clumped in a specific mould. As teens are dissimilar, so are seniors, and to a much greater extent, since they have fifty or sixty years more of differing experience.

LIFELONG LEARNING

We learn until the day we die. Lifelong learning is not a myth. Whether in a formal or informal manner, people are constantly learning.

In order for anyone to learn, there must be the ability to register, retain and recall information. As long as a person is alert, interested, intelligent and has good learning habits, then chronological age has no influence upon information registry. To retain information one must practice. Here, too, there is sufficient evidence to show that age is not a factor. Recall is dependent upon good registry and retention. Recall, to some extent, may take longer as we age, yet the quality of recollection may be better in an older person, as it has been thought through over a longer period of time.

The more we learn, the more we have to remember. Being asked to recall a certain incident may be difficult, especially if it has had relatively little significance for the individual. Remembrance of incidents has more to do with their relative importance to our lives, than with a person's age. Very often, too, as we become older, we must also unlearn in order to relearn. Throughout Canada, people are struggling to learn the metric system. It takes practice but we are all managing to relearn a system of measurement.

The one great barrier to learning is illness. At any age, we find it difficult to learn if we aren't well, and seniors are no exception.

More and more people of all ages are taking advantage of courses, academic and non-academic, at centres, high schools, community colleges and universities, and in some cases, seniors are exempt from paying tuition. Be it the study of child psychology, silkscreening, investment techniques, modern languages, wood working or history, lifelong learning is flourishing.

FLEXIBILITY AND CHANGE

Seniors find they must be more flexible in their retirement than at any other time of life. Never is change more apparent to a person as when the move is made from the work force to retirement. This change may be compared with graduation from high school or university to the workplace.

As people prepare for the working world, they also get ready for retirement. There are an increasing number of pre-retirement courses being offered to help people prepare for this change. Women tend to cope better with the transition than men because they continue friendships not associated with the workplace. Many men's lives and friendships may have centred around their work interests and these contacts diminish with retirement.

The death of a spouse can create immeasurable change in a person's life. Older people are faced with this, and as we are all individuals, it might take longer for some than for others to cope. Although the impact of death is always devastating, older people, on the whole, have a better ability to deal with its implications than younger people.

If too many situations are changing too fast, then we retreat to the known. Frequently those recently bereaved are encouraged by their well-meaning children to take a long trip or even sell the family home. Those who cope well with change usually choose to deal with their grief in familiar surroundings, coming to terms with it before tackling the future. Very often this can be misinterpreted by the family who feel that

the relative is becoming overly introspective, thus causing further problems.

The decision to sell a house, move closer to one's family or enter a retirement home is a common experience for older Canadians. Although many feel that the family usually influences the older relative to change, this is generally not the case. The decision is usually made by the senior after having considered all implications involved in this change.

For those who have always had the ability to be flexible, change in later years will be successful. The key has always been adaptability.

SEX

We have physiological, emotional and social needs. The satisfying of needs may lead to habit. Eating is a habit and, for most, a pleasure that stays with us throughout our lives. Sex is also a habit and a need. Dr. Alex Comfort in *A Good Age* states "that older people are, and always have been sexually active...sexual requirement and capacity are lifelong". Thus, the idea that an interest in sex and sexual activity stops at a certain age is untrue. We all recognize that we have emotional needs and our attempt to satisfy them is lifelong. Our physical needs are no different and physical contact satisfies this at any age.

It should further be remembered that, like all human accomplishments, if you use it, you don't lose it... !

SENILITY

The actual definition of "senility" is "getting old". It has nothing to do with weakness, mental confusion, or loss of memory. Yet, the popular connotation renders senile as a term describing a person who is old, confused and mentally unstable. The word is used indescriminately and always destructively. People, in fact, seem exceptionally surprised if grandpa, at age 85, is not the least bit senile.

About 10 per cent of seniors suffer from organic brain syndrome (brain malfunction), yet so much research has been done on this group that we tend to think of the percentage as much higher. Alzheimer's disease, affecting only older people, is a degenerative brain condition which has no cure. There is a loss of brain cells which causes memory loss, loss of judgement and change in personality. If arteriosclerosis, hardening of the arteries, remains untreated, it, too, will account for loss of memory and judgement.

We usually equate the ability to express ourselves with the ability to think. Many people assume that all stroke victims are mentally impaired because of loss of speech function and we treat them accordingly — which is wrong. Through rehabilitation many stroke victims can regain enough use of limbs and speech to return to a relatively independent life.

As previously stated, ill-health has a detrimental effect on memory for people of any age and in most cases where there is a severe memory loss, there will be an accompanying health condition. Older people are encouraged to consult their physicians if they experience memory impairment or mental confusion, and not accept "senility" as a diagnosis.

We have all heard of older people who seem to live in the past and dismiss or forget the present, and so assume that they are senile. If the present is dull and the future seems gloomy and unpromising, then an individual will return to the past so as to establish a once-secure identity. The person rehearses, over and over, significant and memorable events from the past. The birth of children, marriage, an award or recognition, a surprise party — specific events that have made the person feel important will be remembered. While a person is busy rehearsing past events, present situations may not be registered. The effect of this can be that, while working on a recollection, the kettle will be left to boil dry. This is distraction, not senility.

In fact, to the professional, the term "senile" is now obsolete.

"Old people need what *people* need: personal autonomy, dignity and a useful role in society" writes Alex Comfort. "Few governments can be unaware of the demographics of the future. And there are few politicians who do not hear the stamp of senior feet behind them."

Illustration by Robin Smith

World Assembly on Aging 1982

two

Retirement

Retirement is largely a 20th century phenomenon. The idea of retirement — and even of mandatory retirement at age 65 — is a social issue that western countries have invented and are attempting to deal with. Taking into account today's high unemployment and inflation, retirement is a more controversial issue than ever before.

While dictionaries define retirement as withdrawing from one's position or occupation, it is most commonly associated with leaving paid employment and, although retirement is an event that faces most of us, there are still a number of people who never retire. Self-employed individuals such as consultants, farmers, doctors, and lawyers continue working long after 65. Women whose work centres around the home don't retire from that role either.

Although there is no legislation enforcing mandatory retirement, many companies encourage their employees to retire between age 60 and 65. However, the retirement event normally happens at age 65 when an individual begins to receive government pensions.

INCOME

As far as public pensions are concerned, Canada has come a long way from the original $20 per month in 1951 given to people over age 70. By 1959 the amount had increased to $40 a month, and in July 1982, people over the age of 65 receive the Old Age Security (OAS) payment of $239.73.

For those people with little or no other means of support, the federal government has added a supplement, the Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS). This supplement is income tested, the amount of the benefit being dependent upon an individual's income[1]. Many provinces also have supplements which will further augment the OAS and GIS.

If a spouse is between the ages of 60 and 65 and his or her partner is already collecting OAS and GIS, he or she may be eligible for the Spouse's Allowance. This benefit, introduced in 1975, gives up to $425.28 (July 1982) per month to the spouse, the amount received being dependent upon the combined incomes of both spouses.

July 1982[2] —	Monthly OAS and GIS	
	Single Individual (65 +)	Married Individual (65 +)
OAS	$239.73	$239.73
GIS	$240.67 (maximum)	$185.55 (maximum)
Total	$480.40	$425.28

1. In March 1976, 24 per cent of Canadians received full GIS, 31.1 per cent partial GIS.
2. The OAS and GIS are indexed quarterly.

Seniors relying solely upon the OAS and GIS may find the amount insufficient to maintain the lifestyle to which they are accustomed while others find that, for the first time in their lives, they are receiving a regular pay-cheque.

In order to assure an extra pension for employed individuals, a national pension plan, the Canada Pension Plan (CPP)[3] was established in 1966. This is a contributory plan, payments being shared by employer and an employee who is between the ages of 18 and 64. Benefits begin for the recipient at age 65. The portability of the CPP is its great advantage over private plans.

Approximately 44 per cent of employed persons receive a private company pension with the majority of this group being men[4]. And, while the CPP is indexed quarterly, only 5 per cent of private pensions are indexed to meet increases in the cost of living. Survivor benefits, on the whole, are also unsatisfactory in private pensions. However, it should be mentioned that improvements are being made to the plans in the areas of indexing and survivor benefits.

To compensate for a reduction in income (most find it cut by half), seniors rely heavily on savings accumulated over a working lifetime. There are plans such as Registered Retirement Savings Plans (RRSP) which help build income for people working while also offering them a tax break. Nevertheless, inflation has taken a big bite out of the spending power of savings — necessities just cost more — and seniors, who are finding it difficult to live on their pensions, are continuing to work or are having to depend on family members for additional support.

EMPLOYMENT

Seniors — who, it is felt, should be retired from the work force, but hang on to their jobs — are often viewed as preventing younger people from getting a job. The common belief seems to be that if someone, namely the senior, leaves his job, then every other employee in the company is shifted up a rung and a new employee can be hired. Unfortunately, it usually doesn't work this way. The company will either make do without refilling the position, or hire someone of equal experience as the retiree. The question then arises that if seniors are not easing the youth unemployment rate, why should they be retired at age 65?

There are no federal, provincial or municipal laws or statutes governing retirement in Canada. The decision to retire an individual at age 60, 65 or 70 is governed by internal rules of the company or organization for which the individual works.

Since CPP and OAS benefits begin at 65, it appears almost an unwritten law to terminate employment at that age. This seems to be confirmed by the fact that most company life insurance plans end at 65 while no CPP contributions can be made after age 70. Even RRSPs are only available for employed individuals until age 71. At age 72, employed or not, a person must draw the proceeds of the plan. From all of these figures the age of retirement as 65 is reinforced.

In 1978, 76.5 per cent of men between 55 and 64 years of age were employed and 15.2 per cent were employed past age 65. These statistics show that most men choose retirement by 65. It is also interesting to note that over the years there has been a steady decline in the percentage of employed men aged 65 and over. In 1953, 34.8 per cent were still working past age 65[5].

Most people choose to retire, some because they find that they have sufficient income, others to engage in other activities, while still others cite poor health as a reason. Statistics from the United States show that two-thirds of the people who retire, do so for personal reasons and the remaining one-third at the insistence of their employer[6].

If given the opportunity, many people would continue to work after 65 for financial reasons. However, others choose to stay in the work force because they enjoy working. They find this period of employment one of the most satisfying times of their lives. Pressures of family are reduced, children have left home to pursue their own careers, and the push up the corporate ladder has either been accomplished or is no longer desired. This is the group that usually helps train younger employees, using skills acquired over the years.

With an increasingly healthy old age available to us, we have potentially more productive years to do with as we wish. Whether it be for a longer career or a profitable retirement, the choice should be ours.

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3. The Quebec Pension Plan in the province of Quebec.
4. Statistics Canada, 1978.
5. Statistics Canada, 1978.
6. R.C. Atchley, *The Social Forces in Later Life: An Introduction to Social Gerontology*, 2nd ed., Wadsworth, 1977, p. 165.

PROFITABLE RETIREMENT

Prior to the industrial revolution, people did not retire. Not only could most not afford to stop working, but work was a way of life that a person gave up only when he was no longer physically able.

Very often youth have the tendency to view retirement as non-productive. In our money-oriented world which equates financial gain with the value of work, the status of non-wage earners diminishes. Retirement then may be viewed negatively.

Robert Atchley in *The Social Forces in Later Life* shows that most adults look forward to retirement. However, he does note that the closer one comes to retirement, the anticipation may lessen, especially if the individual feels that his income may be insufficient to carry out desired retirement plans.

Pre-retirement planning, begun at an early age, can help an individual realistically plan for a financially secure and enjoyable retirement. There are numerous programs being developed to help people with financial and social adaption. Europe, since it has a larger senior population than North America, is making the most visible strides in promoting positive retirement and providing pre-retirement programs. Sweden, Belgium, Germany, France and England have all formed associations to encourage these programs. For example, employees of the Bekaert Wire Manufacturing plant in Belgium begin pre-retirement programs five years before the event. Bekaert provides counsellors and uses company time to educate employees and spouses in their own homes on matters of budgets, pensions, nutrition and new activities. This is a very successful project and reflects the needs of Belgium's increasing older population.

So what do people do when they retire? Much is dependent upon a person's finances and previous life experience. For some, travel is great. Thousands of older Canadians spend three or more months of the year in Florida and attest to the fact that this is a good way of life.

Skills acquired in the workplace are not abandoned in the retirement years. Seniors remain active, vital, respected members of the community; their expertise from the business world being applied to voluntary organizations, pressure groups or community boards. In fact, one couple involved in the University of Toronto's Alumni Talent Bank find themselves far busier than before their "graduation" from paid work. Rather than life being focused solely on work, they have been able to expand their interests. They liken retirement to an open hand-held fan — there are many directions that can be followed. On the other hand, some retirees do not want to be active in retirement. There may be the feeling that retirement has been earned and is for "sitting back and resting". As long as the older person is happy doing this then he should not be berated for his non-involvement.

The key to successful retirement, if we wish to retire at all, is planning. It is not unrealistic to begin preparing for retirement at age 35 — it is intelligent.

three

Active Aging

If upon leaving the work force a senior chooses not to retire from life, then he will remain involved in society and all its facets. This may mean taking on projects that he never dreamed of tackling or reviving old interests. Active and involved seniors have a sense of purpose, retain their leadership roles and remain decision-makers in their areas of activity. Sixty-plus years of experience serve seniors to help their peers and others in areas such as fitness, education, craftwork, business and counselling. Community and group involvement is giving a focus to the lives of many.

A very successful example of senior involvement and seniors helping each other is the Canadian Red Cross nationwide "Fun and Fitness" program. This was begun in Saskatchewan several years ago when residents of a retirement home decided that they wanted to boost morale and involvement in their building. They contacted the Red Cross which came up with the idea of a fitness program. The Red Cross sent trained volunteers to teach exercises to those involved. The group has expanded in both participants and instructors to now include more senior teachers who enjoy the leadership responsibilities and social interaction, and students from local high schools who enjoy the intergenerational contact.

Another program that emphasizes active aging is the federal government's New Horizons program. Grants are provided to seniors who wish to start projects and to organizations that contribute to senior involvement in the community. Activities are not restricted to Seniors' Centres. The vast majority of programs are integenerational in nature, especially in the area of education.

The activities that seniors undertake are as diverse as would be expected of a group with so much experience behind them, with involvement not only relegated to work involving older adults but covering all aspects of community life.

VOLUNTEERISM

Volunteers are valuable people. In 1979, about 2.7 million Canadians did volunteer work, totalling close to 400 million hours. If these people had received pay for their services, they would have cost the country $3.5 billion. Volunteer workers are the backbone of any service agency. Without the donation of time by individuals, most organizations would collapse. For the volunteer, this work has its rewards. It is a way that an individual can be useful, involved and in contact with others. One of the greatest contributions seniors make to the cummunity is through volunteer work. Our traditional volunteers used to be made up of women working solely in the home. More recently, with more and more women in the work force, the need for volunteers has become greater than before. Seniors are helping to fill this gap and finding it a stimulating, rewarding experience. These conscientious, hard-working people are constantly needed, so much so, that Senior VIPS (Senior Volunteers in Public Service) cannot fill the great demand for volunteer services.

Senior volunteer commitments may range from working with children in schools to running committees in service and municipal organizations.

One of the very successful programs involving children is the surrogate grandparent program which benefits those children separated from natural grandparents by divorce or the death of a parent. Seniors

are also very active in public schools giving tutoring to children in need of individual attention. The volunteers are successful in bringing children of lower abilities up to the level of their classmates. Other activities include helping to teach crippled children to swim and counselling juvenile offenders. Help to older adults includes friendly visiting and delivering meals-on-wheels. Many volunteers also transport people to hospital or doctor's appointments or help with grocery shopping.

The main result of services such as these is that everyone benefits. The recipient and the senior both achieve satisfaction, while the senior who remains active reaps the enjoyment that only a volunteer can feel, having given a service for pleasure rather than just monetary gain.

PRESSURE GROUPS

Volunteers, though all around us, often go unnoticed. Certain seniors, however, are speaking out through senior power groups. These seniors are retaining control through involvement in the active process of decision-making. In specific groups, seniors retain political power and influence in our society and, in the area of politics, they can gather together their numbers to vote through important issues. In recognition of this, politicians are beginning to react to the powerful senior vote.

When addressing an issue, a power group, such as Canadian Pensioners Concerned, starts by writing letters to members of parliament. Further action may then take the form of petitions, lobbies, letters to the editor, articles, or protests. Seniors also research and study issues and participate in seminars to develop resolutions that can be presented to government. Individual groups will examine relevant issues in the fields of human rights, pensions, medicare and disarmament. An example of senior action was their recent involvement in Ontario's Human Rights Code. Seniors, working together, have managed to protect themselves against age discrimination if they wish to work after age 65. This protection had previously extended only to age 65.

Power groups also function as sources of information for other seniors. Some results of their efforts have been newsletters, a consumer protection handbook, and a booklet on seniors and the law, published by Canadian Pensioners Concerned in Ontario.

In the United States, seniors are exercising their rights by campaigning for their right to visit grandchildren who have been separated from them by divorce. They are also involving themselves in global issues. One of the major groups, the Gray Panthers, is lead by Maggie Kuhn, their founder. During the Vietnam war she felt that it was not just a matter for the young to protest. Today the group continues to protest such matters by attending meetings for nuclear disarmament.

The formation of power groups reflects the concern that older adults have about our rights and our world. It shows that seniors are not withdrawing from society, rather they are retaining control and remaining an active voice in our society while drawing from their experiences to work towards a better world.

four

Making it — With a Little Help

All too often we associate aging with problems but we all have problems at some point or other. Problems such as poverty, loneliness and the search for adequate housing are universal, yet they often seem magnified when applied to older people — but this does not mean that they can't be handled.

LONELINESS

Loneliness is universal. We have all been lonely at some time in our lives. We may have moved from one city to another or have left home for university and this has brought loneliness. There are people who feel that they have no roots so have retreated inwardly, and, as a result, become lonely. Loneliness combines feelings of being neglected, unimportant and abandoned. Very often loneliness is conceived as applying only to the old which is not the case. However, where it does apply, it can be a problem.

Certain types of loneliness are inevitable. The loss of a spouse or companion will naturally bring loneliness. The lack of family and good friends also creates a void. Sometimes we think of people who are living alone as being lonely, yet this may not necessarily be the case. Some people enjoy being alone but they are usually those who are secure, with a good support system upon which to draw, if necessary.

Older women have a tendency to be lonelier, and poorer, than men. As we know, women live longer than men and so more women than men will become widowed. The United Nations states that for every 100 women over 60 there are only 74 men of the same age. The gap increases with age. For every 100 women over 80, there are only 48 men. Peter Naus, in *Growing Old* states that while, presently in Canada, there are 78 men for every 100 women over age 65, by 2000 there will be only 67 men for every 100 women.

Divorce or widowhood also brings loneliness for those men and women with few friends and no family upon which to rely. As loneliness is conditional upon life experience, it is significant to note that single people who have always lived alone successfully will cope well with being alone in old age.

For those who are lonely, contact with others is a good help. Older Adult Centres or Senior Centres provide diverse activities, promote interaction and give companionship to the lonely adult. Having a meal in a group setting is far more enjoyable for the lonely person than eating alone.

Strengthening of family ties and contact with old friends can also serve as a remedy for loneliness. The stability of the traditional family has always lent emotional comfort and a personal support system. A network of good friends forming itself into a support group can serve as a viable alternative to the family structure. There will always be some lonely people and the provision of good support facilities can go a long way in reducing loneliness, at any age.

POVERTY

It is a fact that older, widowed females make up the poorest segment of our society. In 1975, a study by the National Council on Welfare showed that 45 per cent of widows age 55 to 64 were poor and 66 per

cent of widows over the age of 65 were living below the poverty line. The same study showed that less than one woman in four, whose husband had a company pension, could look forward to receiving any income from the pension plan after the husband had died. In addition those who were in receipt of the husband's pension could expect to receive only one-half of the original sum.

Three research groups have differently defined the poverty line in Canada. The poverty line in 1982 for a person living alone is defined as:

a)	Statistics Canada	— $5,307 - 7,303 (dependent upon size of community)
b)	Canada Council on Social Development	— $6,857
c)	Senate Committee on Poverty	— $7,680
	Average	— $7,280

An individual having to rely solely on the OAS and the maximum benefits of the GIS was collecting, in July 1982, $5,764.80 per year. It is difficult to live well on an income $1,515.20 below the average poverty line. However, it should be noted that other benefits do exist although they may differ from province to province. Included in this may be provincial supplements and tax credits for homeowners. In addition, the CPP has a survivor's benefit which will allow the recipient to collect up to 60 per cent of the contributor's monthly benefit.

People over 65 can also benefit from various subsidies. For those with low incomes, subsidized housing is available in most cities. Free drugs, free medical care and reduced transportation fares can also help ease the financial strain placed on many older adults.

It should be noted though, that single people over age 65 are receiving more money per month than single individuals on welfare or occasional workers earning only minimum wage. Therefore, for some seniors, this guaranteed income will actually raise their standard of living.

But, again, not all seniors are poor. People receiving private pension plans and other incomes, in addition to the OAS and CPP, are able to maintain a good standard of living free from financial pressure. In fact, many are in the position to help their children finance their first home or other projects that could, otherwise, not be afforded.

The problem of poverty, though, is often the breaking point for anyone struggling to cope. Regardless of the availability of social services, the biggest strength for an individual under financial strain is still the family. To be able to rely on family members for support can remove at least some of the burden carried by that person. For an elderly person this support helps assure a more comfortable old age.

HOUSING

The wants and needs of seniors for different types of housing are more varied than for any other age group and, in some cases, require more imaginative provisions.

The majority of older adults are happy remaining in their own homes or apartments in neighbourhoods that are familiar and comfortable. But there are also those who, for financial considerations or for companionship, are coming together in group living. This may take many forms. Some join or form group homes, while apartment dwellers may move in with home owners. In Britain, where there are many large homes, Help the Aged has formed a Housing Trust. A property is gifted to the organization and HTA converts the house into small, self-contained apartments for use by older people who need housing. The former owner is provided with rent-free accommodation, has companionship from the other tenants and is relieved of the responsibility of maintaining and repairing a large residence.

British Columbia has several seniors' co-ops. All members are over the age of 50 with most being over 60. They worked with the architect in every aspect of the design, from type of insulation and soundproofing to the colour of the front doors. Members have now assumed financial control and management of the developments.

Senior apartment buildings are also a viable alternative for older adults. They are well equipped with meeting rooms and recreational facilities and have the added benefit of a reasonable rent. However, there is often a waiting list for these apartments and consequently individuals searching for this form of housing may find themselves unable to benefit from these accommodations.

Some seniors may opt for living in a retirement lodge. These privately run homes can afford older adults the freedom to pursue their many activities without having the additional burden of grocery shopping, housecleaning and making meals. Homes for the aged are run either by a municipality, or a charitable

organization. As these homes are government subsidized, older adults with limited means can take advantage of this form of living — as long as there is space available.

As with homes for the aged, many nursing homes have long waiting lists and, for the small number who are in need of the services that a nursing home offers, this wait can be a trying time. For people who need intensive care, there are chronic care hospitals. These are also overcrowded, often with patients who are sufficiently well to return to a nursing home but can't for lack of space. While waiting for accommodation in the nursing home setting, they are taking up beds that would better serve people in greater need.

Regardless of the many forms of housing open to seniors it must be stressed that the majority continue to live independently within their own homes or apartments. For the minority wishing housing alternatives, financial considerations and availability of accommodations and services are still the main factors in determining the selection of residence.

SERVICES FOR SENIORS

There are various services available for the small percentage of older adults needing assistance within their own homes. There are cleaning services to remove the worries of heavy housework, meals-on-wheels which attend to nutritional needs, readers and library services to assure access to the world of books, and friendly visiting programs to offer companionship and conversation. The majority of these services are dependent on volunteers, many of whom are seniors themselves. Good, efficient community programs can afford a better quality of life for people needing assistance and might mean the difference between that person remaining at home or having to move into an institutional setting.

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Intergenerational Programs

"Bridging the Generation Gap" is a headline that, these days, we are seeing more and more whereas a generation ago, it might not have been necessary. It refers to programs that are being undertaken in North America to bring together young and old to promote personal contact and mutual understanding. The generation gap can be bridged anywhere — in schools, community centres, nursing homes or private residences.

The following are basic objectives that groups conducting intergenerational programs have formulated:

- to give young people an understanding of aging and the aging process;
- to dispel myths and stereotypes about both age groups that can impede communication between them;
- to provide opportunities for increased communication and understanding between generations and assist in the building of mutually supportive relationships;
- to utilize and develop the skills of both age groups by developing mutual learning experiences for younger and older persons;
- to encourage a sense of commitment and responsibility to society and provide appealing community service opportunities to both younger and older members of the community;
- to help provide home support service for the elderly by recruiting student workers to do odd jobs around the home, thereby assisting them to stay in their own homes for as long as they wish.

The following are intergenerational models that are being conducted in schools in North America. The concepts discussed can be adapted to many situations and, in structuring programs, educators may want to adapt and combine them.

IN-SCHOOL TEACHING AND PLACEMENT PROGRAM

This involved seniors working with students in the classroom setting as a unit of the course curriculum. Topics include: planning for a healthy and satisfying life; understanding the aging process; coping with stress and bereavement; becoming aware of community services; exploring the nature of relationships between the generations; and consideration of issues such as mandatory retirement.

As another aspect of the program, students are given placements with older people within the community — especially elderly persons who are shut in. Many friendships have developed from these visits and relationships have continued long after the course has ended.

TEACHING-LEARNING PROGRAMS

This program follows the concept developed in elementary schools in Ann Arbor, Michigan (Teaching-Learning Communities) in 1974. It can, though, be easily adapted to the high school situation.

Young and old are brought together to share creative learning activities and experiences. Senior

volunteers are invited to be teacher/learners in the schools. The students and older adults join in small groups to undertake projects in the arts, crafts and humanities, during regularly scheduled class time.

Seniors benefit from interaction between the school and members of the community as the program recognizes the needs of older citizens for active involvement, contact with youth, and the opportunity to share their skills and knowledge. It equally fulfils the students' needs for mutually caring and supportive relationships with older adults and gives opportunities for new learning experiences.

Essentially the program consists of weekly intergenerational visits spent in such activities as painting, quilting, creative writing, horticulture, woodworking, baking and other arts and crafts. The participants choose their activities and work together in small groups with the seniors acting as group leaders.

While teaching and learning there is a chance for all participants to talk, form relationships and provide support and guidance for one another in sharing ideas and feelings.

AFTER SCHOOL JOB REGISTRY

Students have an opportunity to earn extra money ($2.50 – $3.50 per hour) in work that benefits the community and its older residents. They undertake a variety of jobs in the homes of older adults. These will include house and apartment cleaning, painting, lawn mowing, snow shovelling, shopping and errands.

For students, this gives work experience and references for future employment, offers on-the-job P.R., builds new friendships and lets young people experience new environments. For seniors it gives help for tasks that they find too time consuming at the cost of more pleasurable activities. Too, it offers new friendships with youth.

INTERGENERATIONAL HEALTH FAIR

An Intergenerational Health Fair offers health information, health screening and counselling referral for seniors and high school students, and is aimed at encouraging future self-help efforts. Community service agencies, schools, health facilities, and community members of all ages are involved in the planning, co-ordination and implementation of the program.

The primary objective is to provide a vehicle for health promotion and health education to senior adults and adolescents residing in the community. The community focus and intergenerational aspect afford the participants the opportunity to engage in dialogue, thus furthering their understanding and appreciation of each others unique, yet similar, life and health concerns.

IN-SCHOOL WORK ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

This type of program operates within secondary schools which offer occupational training courses to their students. Those following courses in hair dressing, appliance repair, carpentry, food services and other practical fields of study, are given the opportunity to employ these skills while assisting seniors within the community.

Older adults are invited to the participating schools to have their hair done, eat lunch, get small appliances repaired and participate in other trade programs offered by the schools — all at a much more reasonable cost than offered by commercial concerns.

In addition to this program, there are high schools which offer enrollment to seniors in daytime credit courses. The mix of generations within the classroom offers a lively situation, giving benefits that go beyond the course itself. In addition, one school offers health courses for seniors, a fitness program, and a time slot for woodworking and sewing.

ADOPT A GRANDPARENT/GRANDCHILD PROGRAM

The Adopt a Grandparent/Grandchild Program links older adults living in their own homes, homes for the aged, and nursing homes, with children and adolescents on a one-to-one basis. This is an exchange program for the purpose of friendly visiting and is especially attractive to young people and older adults

who are not part of an active extended family. Weekly visits are arranged between the youth and the older adult. Regularly scheduled visits to the home of the grandperson may include recreational outings, shopping trips, craft or sports instruction, as well as conversation and refreshments. Ideally, the grandperson will also be invited to the home of the grandchild to enjoy visits with the entire family.

HERITAGE PROGRAMS

Seniors visit schools or youth groups to bring history alive. One marvellous part of our country is its multi-cultural mosaic. Adolescents can learn from new Canadians about other lands — their customs and cultures which have enriched our country. Very often seniors will put their recollections on tape which can be stored in the school library for future reference.

VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS IN LONG-TERM CARE FACILITIES

For a lot of people living in institutions, there is little contact with young people. In many long-term care facilities, volunteer co-ordinators are looking to younger people to become active in the home. With adolescents coming to the home, a teaching/learning situation can be organized within that setting.

TUTORING PROGRAMS IN SCHOOLS

Older adults participate in the individual instruction of students. These range from tutoring programs in inner-city schools to one-to-one instruction in schools for the physically and/or mentally handicapped.

CONFERENCES

More and more, students and seniors are getting together to discuss mutual problems and issues of importance in their community. This may take the form of an organized one-day conference, or an informal get-together.

In 1974, the National Retired Teachers' Association in the United States sponsored a pilot conference, "Youth Conference With Older Americans", and subsequently issued a hand-book for students (see Books and Films) which guides them in setting up this form of conference. This can easily be adapted for use in Canada.

In a more informal gathering, two years ago in Toronto, students and seniors joined together to view the movie "Going in Style", with lively discussion ensuing.

As has been stated, Intergenerational Programs must be adapted to the community and no models follow a hard and fast rule. An example comes from a small Canadian town where an intergenerational program forms a part of the physical education and health course. It involves older adults from the community, a home for the aged, and nursing homes, as well as the high school students. Students and seniors take part in many mutual activities in the school, the institutions, and private homes. Very often these take the form of entertainment, with each group organizing a program. Included, too, is the taping of life experiences of the older adult by the students, the assistance of seniors in classroom discussions on aging, and a service given to seniors in their own homes. Students go on their spare periods, or after school, to help with shopping, house cleaning, or they act as a taxi service to take people to appointments.

As diverse as all of these programs are, there are certain considerations that any group (be it all school or otherwise) must take into account when planning a program. It isn't easy and takes a lot of work, yet the rewards can be far in excess of energy expended.

- Before embarking on a program, be sure that there is support from school authorities (principal/teachers).
- Research programs and services currently available within the community. Involve seniors in assessing needs and gaps in services.
- Form a committee to plan a realistic program. The group should include representatives from the school, seniors in the community, along with community workers, where applicable.
- Appoint a program co-ordinator.
- Consider transportation facilities for students and seniors who are involved.

BE ORGANIZED AND CONSISTENT IN THE PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAM.

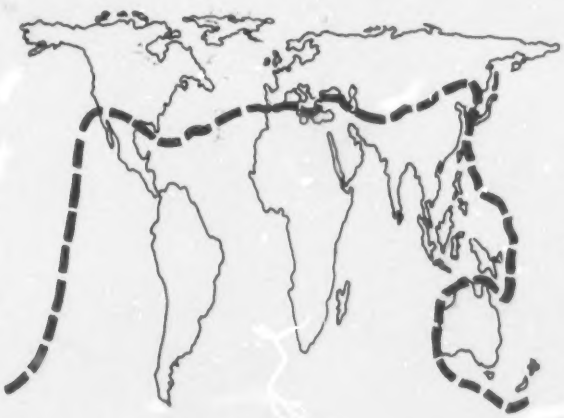
CONSTANTLY INVOLVE SENIORS IN PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAM.

DO NOT BE OVER-AMBITIOUS.

BE RELIABLE.

Aging in other Societies

Whenever we are discussing older people in other societies it becomes necessary to consider the conditions in those countries where they are living. On the whole, we, in North America, Europe, Australia and New Zealand (the industrialized countries) are better off financially than the average person living in other areas of the world (developing countries).



Where would you like to live on your 60th birthday — above or below this line?
Consider these statistics:

North

- 1/4 of world's population
- 4/5 of world's income
- most people have enough to eat
- life expectancy — approx. 70 years

- 90% of world's manufacturing industry
- 96% of world's spending on research and development

South

- 3/4 of world's population
- 1/5 of world's income
- 1/5 or more suffer from hunger or malnutrition
- life expectancy — approx. 50 years, with 1/4 of all children dying before age 5

2/3 of the world's poorest people live in Bangladesh, Pakistan, India, and Indonesia.
90% of Peru's older people have no pension, and there are 75,000 homeless elderly in Hong Kong.

Yearly Per Capita Income:

North		South	
Australia	$ 7,689	Bangladesh	$110
Canada	$ 9,640	India	$190
U.S.A.	$10,630	Haiti	$260
Switzerland	$13,920	Pakistan	260
		Zaire	$260
		Indonesia	$370

Kuwait — O.P.E.C. Nation $17,100

(Source: World Development report, 1981 — World Bank)

In developing countries, the majority of the people live within rural areas — India 78 per cent, Kenya 86 per cent, Bangladesh 89 per cent, Honduras 64 per cent and Haiti 72 per cent. For the most part they live off the land. People might own only one and a half acres of land and must depend upon the proceeds of that to feed their families. Others owning no land are only seasonally employed, gaining a livelihood just during the planting and harvesting of the crop. The elements, too, play a large part in rural life. Cyclones, tidal waves and earthquakes destroy land and livestock, while drought can wither crops and lay the land bare.

While North Americans tend to live in a nuclear family (parent(s) and offspring), until recently, those in developing countries have resided within an extended family. This may consist of the elderly parents, sons (daughters upon marriage will live with their husbands' families), their wives and children.

The elder has always been recognized as the head of the house as he holds the knowledge of a lifetime within him. He knows the land, the seasons and the problems. He rules the family. As the elder ages, he gradually hands over responsibility for the land (if any) to his eldest son — but this does not mean that he retires. In countries where Government pensions are not universal, there is no such thing as retirement. Rather, there is a gradual shift to lighter work, collecting fodder, driving the bullock or caring for the animals. The older woman, for her part, may stop working in the fields and take over the cooking and care of the children. Even though the elderly father has become less active, he is still considered as the font of knowledge and continues to hold an honoured place in a society where wealth is measured not in dollars but rather in family relationships.

Yet the family unit in developing countries is changing. Migration to the cities, education and industrialization are fast changing rural life. Better education has opened up vistas for those in rural areas and the combination of this, along with the thought of employment in industry, has lured youth to the cities in large numbers. Statistics show that in Peru in 1960, 54 per cent of the population lived in rural areas, with this declining to 33 per cent in 1980. Similarly, in some 20 years, Colombia's rural population fell from 52 per cent to 30 per cent.

In India, cities like Bombay and Calcutta are bursting at the seams. People are living on the streets as they are unable to find housing. Some who are able to find accommodation within a city, do bring their parents with them, but in a strange environment the worth of the parent may be lost — his experience will be totally alien to his new surroundings.

China, for the most part, depends upon the family to take care of its elderly. In fact, the National Marriage Law requires that children and grandchildren take full responsibility for their aged parents. The added complication of youth migration is not applicable here as laws state that no relocation can take place without government approval. For those living in cities and working in industry, a generous pension is provided. When they leave the workplace to give way to youth entering the work force, they are given pensions of between 50 per cent and 100 per cent of their wage. Yet, the 80 per cent of those living in rural areas work until they are no longer able as they receive no pension at all. The later years for a Chinese person are not spent in inactivity. It becomes their job to look after and teach the younger members of the family while parents work. They are regarded, to the end, as useful, vital family members.

"An Old Man is a Library that is Burning" — is a West African saying that may lose its validity in a number of years. Historically, old people have had an honoured place within the family and village. They wielded power as chiefs and elders and were respected for their wisdom and knowledge. Migration, the advent of new technology, and war, have made a change, too, in this area of the world. Thirty years ago the following quote from the 1980 Africa Regional Meeting (in preparation for the World Assembly) would not have been valid — "The number of aging are increasing and the knowledge, skill and untapped potential they represent, should not go to waste" — all this would have been taken for granted. With this changing

situation, older people, especially those alone, or in dying villages, have had to find way to make a livelihood in order to compensate.

Many older people in developing countries are undertaking self-help projects — usually under the supervision of community workers — to provide small incomes in later years. This form of development is providing the elderly with money that might help their struggling families and, equally important, give them a purpose for their later years.

In Bogotà, Colombia, a group of older people are running a bakery. Loaves are made there each day, one-half of which are sold to cover salaries and costs, the rest being sent to homes for the aged in the city. In addition, others bring baked goods to the bakery where, these too, are sold. This small concern is thriving and being used as a model to show what older Colombians can do to help themselves.

On a smaller scale, seed money can be given to groups to start small dairy and poultry units. In one area in India, 80 older people are conducting such a project. Originally the group had 10 cows and 300 chickens. Three years later this had grown to 30 milking cows, 20 calves and 1400 chickens. Great care is taken of the animals and birds and, again, this gives older people a sense of purpose. The eggs and milk are sold in the area, and the proceeds fulfil the nutritional needs of these old people.

In rural areas, almost forgotten crafts are being revived. Older women are teaching the young and receiving incomes for their handiwork.

The social implications for older people in countries undergoing a shift in population age are far reaching. Governments must take into account the growing percentage of older people in their countries and re-think strategies to better consider this growing segment of the population. It would not be in keeping to follow the pattern of the West by institutionalizing their old people. Rather, they must find alternate services to deal with this situation. One alternative would be to redevelop rural areas, drawing upon experiences of the old to plan for the future as development for the elderly cannot be conducted in isolation.

Better farm equipment and techniques and better fishing boats for fishermen can restrengthen villages that have become run-down. Through all of this re-development, young people could be lured back to villages that would prosper. Older people will regain their sense of family and live their remaining years in happiness while contributing experiences from the past to help the present and make a better future.

It is hard to see an historically strong family unit disintegrate as it has begun to, in Third World countries, — and especially in the way it affects the elderly. The close family situation that we, in the West, have so envied, may become a thing of the past and problems of age alienation, that we are battling, may only be starting in these countries. Yet there is time to correct this situation if developing countries recognize and take hold of the problem facing them.

Photograph by Markéta Luskačova
World Assembly on Aging 1982

People do not cease to be useful when they grow old: experience and skill increase with age. A woman who cared for children at 20, worked the fields at 30, made clothes for market at 40, can do all these and more at 60.

Books and Films

Books

The Social Forces in Later Life: An Introduction to Social Gerontology, 2nd ed.
Robert C. Atchley
Wadsworth Publishing Co., Belmont, Calif., 1977
Atchley's book is informative and well-documented. The book discusses everything associated with aging — from health to government. It is clearly written and easy to understand. Atchley makes good use of charts and graphs as well as having a glossary at the back. This book would be a valuable resource.

A Good Age
Dr. Alex Comfort
Simon and Schuster, 1976
A Good Age is probably one of the most readable books on aging. It is warm and well-written. It is well-indexed so that specific topics are easy to pick out and covers absolutely everything, including quotes from people over the ages. The book is also pleasant to look at with illustrations and water-colours of famous old people like Albert Einstein, George Burns and Mae West.

Educational Kit for the Study of Growing Old
Development Education and Action
DEA,
St. Paul's Centre at Trinity,
427 Bloor St. West,
Toronto, Ontario, M5S 1X7
This kit is composed of essays on issues, vignettes, poems and plays, songs, quizzes, biographical sketches and a teacher's guide. The kit is $75. It is well done and includes pictures and tapes which make the presentation interesting.

Context of Aging in Canada
Ann Fales, Dorothy MacKeracher, Deborah Vigoda
OISE Press, Toronto, 1981
Context of Aging in Canada, a part of the ISIS kit, is a guide that can be used in conjunction with ten audio tapes. However, it can also stand on its own as an excellent resource for both teachers and students. It is a text easy to understand but not overly simplified. It deals with general theories and facts on aging. It makes an effort to explain the preliminary thoughts to the facts; such as explaining the working of the eye before telling how and why eyesight fails in older people. It also employs graphs, charts and diagrams to illustrate these facts which makes it an easier guide to read.

The Old in the Community
Help the Aged, Education Department
44 Eglinton Avenue West
Suite 311A
Toronto, Ontario, M4R 1A1
This book is clearly written and easy to understand. Through role-playing situations, it discusses independence, support systems, family relations, care facilities and bereavement. This workbook sells for $10.

Aging in Canada
Victor W. Marshall
Fitzhenry and Whiteside, 1980
Aging in Canada provides current Canadian statistics and makes good use of charts, graphs and diagrams. The book contains articles written by Canadian authorities on aging and discusses work, leisure, retirement, family, health, and women. To read the whole book might be a little too much, but to draw statistics from it is excellent.

Humanistic Perspectives on Aging
Walter G. Moss
Institute of Gerontology, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1976
Humanistic Perspectives on Aging is a resource guide citing other books and films on the studying of aging. It includes essays, novels, poetry, dramas and short stories as well as non-fictional study resources.

Youth Conferences with Older Americans
The National Retired Teachers' Association, with the American Association of Retired Persons and the National Association of Secondary School Principals.
Youth Conference Handbook
NASSP
1904 Association Drive
Reston, Va.
22091
U.S.A
The Youth Handbook is a detailed account of an intergenerational conference that worked. It outlines how to plan for the conference as well as documenting the results and would be an excellent starting point for initiating a similar program. The booklet is also FREE.

Growing Old
Peter J. Naus
Faculty of Education, University of Toronto, 1980
Growing Old is an excellent, well-written book. It is concise and provides statistics as well as analysis on the subject of aging. It covers almost everything involving the physical, mental and social aspects of aging. It is a good starting point for research and the nice thing about it is that it deals with Canadian facts and figures.

Growing Old in the Country of the Young
Charles H. Percy
McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1974
Among the topics discussed in *Growing Old in the Country of the Young* are health, finances, power, nursing homes and seniors' centres. The book is caring and well-written. It has a United States bias but it provides good case studies.

Teaching About Aging
Francis E. Pratt
ERIC Clearing House for Social Studies, 1977, Boulder, Colorado
Teaching About Aging is ideally a guide for teachers that discusses, among other things, why we need to study and teach aging. It also deals with the societal limitations and stereotypes we have created and how we must deal with them. The book is easy to read and lists other references and resources that can be used in studies. An interesting part of the book outlines a mini-gerontology course. The book uses statistics and case studies and also provides an evaluation test for students.

To The Good Long Life
Morton Puner
Universe Books, 1974
To The Good Long Life is an informative, well-written book that discusses retirement, leisure, death and dying, nutrition, sex and marriage. It draws on a lot of sources and uses many statistics. The statistics imply a United States bias, but can be applied to the Canadian situation.

Films

Aging
International Telefilm
21 minutes, colour, English
This film is a documentary that takes a positive look at retirement. It examines and dispels some of the stereotypes envisioned about retirement. Its aim is to compare two theories: the activity theory of aging vs. the disengagement theory. It does a good job of making retirement seem enjoyable for active older adults and the rocking-chair crowd.

A Matter of Indifference
International Telefilm
46 minutes, black and white, English
This is a factual film rather than a story. It has interviews with Maggie Kuhn and others who age actively. It discusses isolation, segregation, discrimination and various problems and issues facing seniors as well as what they are doing about them. The facts flow nicely.

Photograph by Julie Jensen

"To be ashamed of your age is a denial of yourself," says Maggie Kuhn, 76-year old founder of the Gray Panthers. "It's like throwing away 20 years of your life."

Drawing by David Smith

World Assembly on Aging 1982

At 99: A Portrait of Louise Tandy Murch
Sunrise Films Ltd.
23 minutes, colour, English
This is one of the few Canadian films about older adults. It is about the spritely life of Louise at 99. It gives some of her positive views on life and some of her plans for the future. It is pleasant to watch and, unlike other films, it looks like Louise has many productive years ahead of her. Louise is an amazing woman.

Augusta

National Film Board
16 minutes, colour, English
This film is about an old Indian woman living on her own, as she has done for most of her life, in a log cabin that lacks the amenities of hot water and electricity. The woman has a lot of natural, logical ideas about living and dying. One of the interesting things she discusses in the film is her longevity as compared to the others in her family — she has outlived all of her children.

End of a Salesman
Marlin Motion Pictures
16 minutes, colour, English
This is a "60 Minutes" news clip. It deals with forced retirement and uses the employees of an American oil company as an example of edging out older employees. It discusses the stigma of being fired late in life, company pressures and inadequate pensions. It is a factual presentation but it is not conclusive as it deals with only one side of the conflict. It would spark a good class discussion.

Lifeclimb
International Telefilm
23 minutes, colour, English
Lifeclimb is most noteable for the fact it is a true-life adventure story. It is about a retired corporate vice-president who is given only a few years to live. He decides that he'd like to overcome his greatest fear in life and that is the fear of heights. The story of his fight for life is also the story of his personal attack on the retirement blahs. The film deals with the negative connotations of retirement, physical decline, and positive thinking to cure illness. The fact that he succeeds and lives far longer than the doctors had predicted gives the film its success.

Miles to Go Before I Sleep
Marlin Motion Pictures
79 minutes, colour, English
This film is well done. The only drawback is its length, but it is worth the extra time. Well-known actors contribute to the film's interest and entertainment. It deals with the stubborness of all people and voices opinions we often will not say out loud. A certain amount of stereotyping is done in the film but it is an effective means of illustrating problems. Intergenerational programs are also illustrated. The story line is a bit implausible because of its happy-ever-after ending. However, younger people will relate to the situation of the teenager having no patience with an older person, and an older person without any liking for the younger generation.

Passing Quietly Through
Grove Press
29 minutes, black and white, English
This is a well-made film. The story line is such that it will never be dated. The scene is set almost exclusively in the bedroom of a dying old man and the plot centres around his interaction with his visiting nurse. The film deals with loneliness, communication, sex, the right to remain in one's own home, the similarity of thought between old and young, poverty and enjoyment of life. It manages to cover a lot of topics successfully and clearly in a short space of time.

Peege
Randal Klieser
28 minutes, colour, English
Peege is a highly acclaimed film. It deals with a family unable to relate to a blind and crippled grandmother. The eldest grandson successfully reaches out to her on the level of loving memories and shared experiences. It is an eye-opening look at our stilted relationships with the elderly.

Ruth Stout's Garden
International Telefilm
29 minutes, colour, English
Ruth Stout has an amazingly steady voice and is a good narrator. The film is a little slow to start and rather introspective at the beginning when Ruth is discussing her gardening techniques, but it does become more relevant. The garden is the centre of Stout's life — it gives her purpose — and from it she branches out to discuss the child-rearing philosophy under which she was raised and amusing anecdotes from her life. She is natural on camera and comes across with some truely memorable lines as she says exactly what she thinks.

The Street
Mordecai Richler
10 minutes, black and white, English
This is an award-winning animated film that is done as only Mordecai Richler could perceive old age. It deals with death and the dying from a child's point of view and it is the child-like honesty that allows the film to say the things most of us think but are taught never to mention: things like. . ."I'll be glad when the old lady's gone." The art work is constantly moving and changing. The film does not make any judgements about what is good or bad, so it would be a good lead-in to a discussion.

The Wild Goose
VEC
19 minutes, black and white, English
This film gives a humorous look at the confinement, and eventual escape from a nursing home, of a disgruntled resident who has a motorized wheel chair. It uses stereotypes to illustrate the silliness of some of our misconceptions. The characters are priceless and the senior who is acting is great.

Other Suggested Films

All Our Tomorrows
27 minutes, colour, National Film Board

Old Age
50 minutes, colour, BBC Enterprises Rental Library (from the Family of Man Series)

The Business of Aging
30 minutes colour, National Film Board

The Vacant Lot
17 minutes, colour, National Film Board

Three Grandmothers
28 minutes, colour, National Film Board

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